DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

REVIEWED BY John Simms DATE 3-9-81

RDS☐or XDS☐EXT. DATE
TS AUTH. REASON(S)
ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐
DECLASSIFIED☐ RELEASABLE☑
RELEASE DENIED☐
PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS

SCS custody case of 2

(427)

DEC 23 1977

MEMORANDUM TO: ARA/LA - Ms. Sally Shelton

FROM: CA - Robert T. Hennemeyer /s/

SUBJECT: People's Temple in Guyana

The Office of Special Consular Services is receiving an increasing number of inquiries concerning American citizens who are living in Jonesboro, Guyana with the People's Temple religious group. These inquiries without exception allege that the person in question is either being held against their will or has been "brainwashed" by the leader of the group, Jim Jones. Recent newspaper and magazine articles highly unfavorable to Jones and his organization have fanned public opinion, and there are the first indications of attempts to organize persons with relatives or friends in Jonesboro as a pressure group, particularly in the San Francisco area. Acting as individuals, concerned relatives and friends have been able to interest most of the California Congressional delegation and Vice President Mondale's office in specific cases; an organized effort could be expected to create even greater publicity and pressure.

Ambassador Lawrence Mann, Ambassador from Guyana to the United States, is aware of the unfavorable press article concerning the People's Temple. Recent reporting by the Embassy in Georgetown indicated that Ambassador Mann was apprehensive about the effect of this adverse publicity on Guyana's image in the United States and that he would speak to Jones personally regarding some child custody cases pending at that time (Georgetown 2890). As there are some 130-150 children presently believed to be in Jonesboro who were awarded to the People's Temple as wards of the California courts and who may have been illegally taken from California without the permission of the courts, it is anticipated that public interest in these cases will continue and increase as the opposition to Jones becomes more organized.

ACTION REQUESTED:

In light of Ambassador Mann's interest and previous personal involvement with the People's Temple, CA would appreciate ARA conveying to Ambassador Mann our interest and concern that the child custody matters will be expeditiously reviewed by the courts in Guyana and that the Government of Guyana will take appropriate steps to ensure that Mr. Jones and the People's Temple abide by the decisions of those courts.

CA:SCS:FLHenneke:sas
12/22/77 x28089

Clearances: SCS - Ms. Powers
SCS - Mr. Dobrenchuk
SCS - Mr. Gise